



CLEAN ENERGY FOR OUR HEALTH

Renewables Provide Healthy Air and Water for All

Fossil fuels are polluting the air we breathe and water we drink every day, especially in low-income communities and communities of color. By transitioning to 100% clean, renewable energy, all of our communities will be safer and healthier places to live, play, and work.

FOSSIL FUELS ARE PUTTING OUR HEALTH AT RISK

Clean air and water are a basic human rights, yet the fossil fuel industry gets a pass to pollute at the expense of public health. As a result, dirty air and water are making us sick.

- Four out of every ten people in the United States live in an area with unhealthy levels of air pollution.¹ One out of every four receives water from a contaminated or untested source.²
- Rates of asthma have doubled since 1980 due to poor air quality.³ Childhood asthma is robbing thousands of kids of an active, healthy lifestyle.
- Vehicle exhaust alone leads to more than 50,000 premature deaths annually in the United States.⁴ This is even higher than the nation's annual number of vehicle crash fatalities.

Low-income people and communities of color are disproportionately threatened by pollution from fossil fuels like coal and gas. These pollutants cause bronchitis, lung disease, and many more dangerous health conditions.⁵

Our unjust energy system means that the most vulnerable communities are often located closest to the dangerous sources of pollution. 68% of African Americans live within 30 miles of a coal-fired power plant, compared with 56% of whites.⁶ African Americans are 172% more likely to die from asthma than white Americans. Latinos are 165% more likely to live in counties with unhealthy levels of power plant pollution than non-Latino whites.⁷

CLEAN ENERGY = CLEAN AIR AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

We have the solutions we need to protect the health and safety of our communities. Transitioning away from dirty fuels to 100% clean and renewable energy will mean cleaner air and healthier families. Generating more of our energy from clean and renewable sources like wind and solar means reducing our reliance on dangerous, pollution sources—like coal and gas—that threaten public health.

- Unlike fossil fuels, clean, renewable sources of energy do not dump dangerous pollutants into our air and water that threaten the health of local residents.

Impacted Community

For decades, the Lakeshore Power Plant on Cleveland's East Side polluted this predominantly African American community. The NAACP ranked it as the sixth-worst environmental justice offender in the nation. Despite the plant's recent closure, pollution effects linger for the local population. The community is also burdened with the vehicle exhaust of large trucks moving goods in still-operating industrial areas nearby. Now, local leaders are working toward a 100% clean energy future to make this neighborhood emissions-free and a safe, healthy area in which to live, work, and grow up.

Data

Data can inform how clean energy policies and programs can best direct the co-benefits of energy efficiency and renewable energy investments. Funding should be directed toward the most vulnerable communities to ensure that these communities are in position to lead solutions that will benefit us all.

In California, CalEnviroScreen is a mapping tool used to aggregate data from more than 30 metrics, that track health risks and exposure related to environmental hazards and pollution, land use, and biological and social vulnerabilities. All of these data are in the public domain and collected by various state and federal regulatory agencies. The tool shows the proximity of sensitive populations to a variety of health threats and pollution sources, ambient air concentrations of key pollutants, health risk and biological hazard estimates related to pollution exposure, water quality metrics, various social determinants of health identified from the research and regulatory literature on environmental health, and indicators of climate disruption, impact, and vulnerability.

CalEnviroScreen also aggregates all the measures into a single score, to identify areas with the highest cumulative effects and vulnerabilities within various regulatory regions of the state and statewide. Scores are shown on a map at the census-tract level to focus on residential and sensitive land uses where people live, work, and play, and to help identify areas with the highest need. This tool helped shape California's climate policy. As California passed greenhouse gas legislation and shared solar bills, these bills required 25% of funds and projects be directed toward communities identified by the CalEnviroScreen. A similar mapping tool is being developed in New York.

*Want to see the cities and communities that are already committed to achieving 100% renewable energy? Check out our up-to-date map at: **Readyfor100.org***

- The switch to clean, renewable energy sources like wind and solar has already prevented 12,700 premature deaths from fossil fuel pollution in the United States in this past decade.⁸
- We can save trillions of gallons of water by transitioning from water-intensive fossil fuel plants to renewable energy. Drought-prone communities will become more resilient with more abundant and cleaner water sources.⁹
- Electric vehicles and clean transportation options can save lives and improve health, especially for those who live near highways and are overburdened with vehicle pollution. In California alone, four out of ten residents live near a freeway or busy road. Replacing fossil fuel vehicles with electric vehicles and clean transportation could prevent 10,000 asthma attacks annually.¹⁰

Are you committed to transitioning your city, municipality, or state to 100% clean, renewable energy? Show that you are **#ReadyFor100** by joining or starting a local campaign, signing a petition, or contacting your local decision-makers. For more information about how to get involved in the movement, go to **ReadyFor100.org**

ENDNOTES

- 1 American Lung Association
- 2 Natural Resource Defense Council
- 3 The White House
- 4 Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- 5 NAACP

- 6 Energy Justice Network
- 7 American Lung Association
- 8 *Nature*
- 9 Department of Energy
- 10 Environment California

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